

SESSION

1

BECOMING
ONE

MEMORY VERSE

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”

Genesis 2:24

We all desire to love and be loved and to feel valued and significant. Most of us probably thought those needs would be met in marriage. While earthly marriage can be absolutely wonderful, it can also be challenging. We want to discover the truth about marriage so we'll experience the full life God offers us.

The secret, of course, is in the Word of God.

SESSION 1

GROUP DISCUSSION

- Introduce yourselves to each other: Share where you work, how many children you have, etc.
- Share the story of how you met your husband and got engaged.
- What do you hope to learn during *Wisdom for Marriage*?

SESSION 1

NOTES FOR LEADERS

If your group is watching the video together, you can use this page to summarize the lesson afterward. However, if each person watches the video independently, you can use this page as an outline to teach the lesson when your small group gathers. By watching the videos, you can gain more insight as a leader.

Read Key Scripture – Matthew 7:24-27

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.²⁵ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.²⁷ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

Ask the Group

- What two things do you need to do in order to be wise in building your relationship with your spouse?
- How can you put that into practice this week? What can you share with others in your group that has worked for you?

KEY POINT

We need to hear God's Word and put it into practice daily to build a strong marriage.

Read Key Scripture – Genesis 2:24

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Ask the Group

- What does it mean to become “one” in marriage?
- How can you become one in spirit?
- What is the best way to become soulmates?

KEY POINT

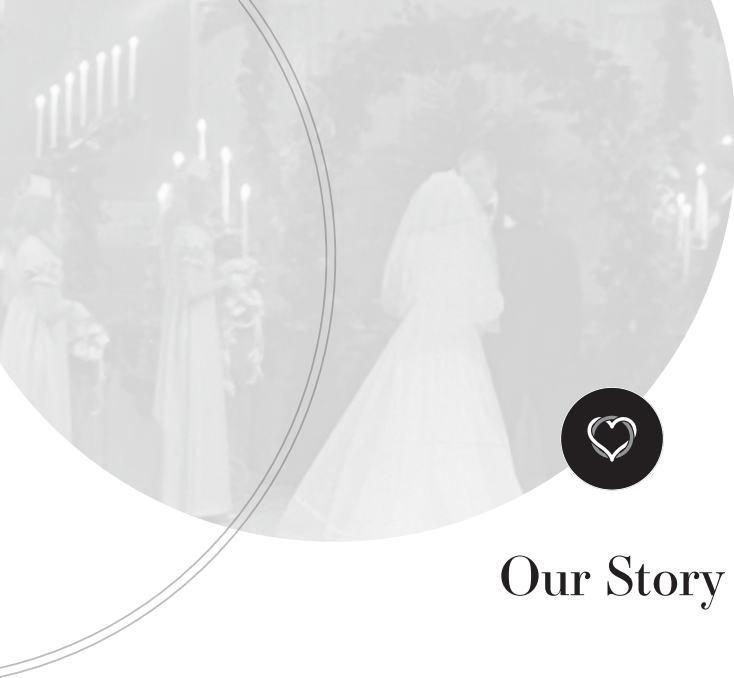
Being “one” in spirit, soul, and body is the goal and privilege of marriage.



DAY 1

THE RIGHT PRIORITIES

I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named. Please, Lord, I ask to be strengthened with power through Your Spirit in my inner being so that Jesus would dwell in my heart through faith. I pray this in Your name. Amen.



Our Story

David and I fell in love while studying at university, and we had a dream of building a family together. We were both followers of Jesus Christ and actively involved in the large church near our campus. If someone had asked us about the key priorities for building a godly home, we probably wouldn't have had a good response. Seven years into our marriage, when we hit a low point in our relationship, we learned the answer to this important question.

If we wanted a successful marriage and home, we had to prioritize our relationship with God above all else. Our marriage had to become our next priority over work and serving others. Our children were our third priority, but our marriage had to take precedence, even over our relationship with them.

It took a difficult time in our relationship to help us make God our top priority and to realize that our nearest neighbor was each other. We finally learned that just as in building a new house, we had to have a strong foundation with our priorities in the right order so that our house would stand when the storms of life came.



Spend Time in God's Word

Priorities for Your Marriage

Jesus gave the two greatest commandments for every marriage in Matthew 22:37-40: *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.⁵⁸ This is the great and first commandment.⁵⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”*

- What is your first priority according to these verses?
What is second?

- How can you apply this to your marriage?

The Right Foundation for Your Marriage

Jesus gives us more instruction in building our families in Matthew 7:24-27, *“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.²⁵ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.²⁷ And the rain fell, and the*

floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

- What characterized the wise man’s house?

- What two things do you need to do in order to be wise in building your relationship with your husband?

Our relationship with God is the foundation of life and all relationships, especially our marriage. He’s the Rock on which we build our family. But we can’t just hear the Word of God to build our foundation; we must also do what the Bible says. God’s Word is the best marriage manual you will ever read. It will give you clear instructions that apply to all men and women in all cultures and societies, but you have to put it into daily practice in your life and your relationships and “live it out” for the principles to work in your life.

We found this out the hard way. We went to church every Sunday, attended weekday Bible studies, and hung out with Christian friends, but in our marriage relationship, we were only “hearers” of God’s Word, not “doers.” And it got us into trouble.

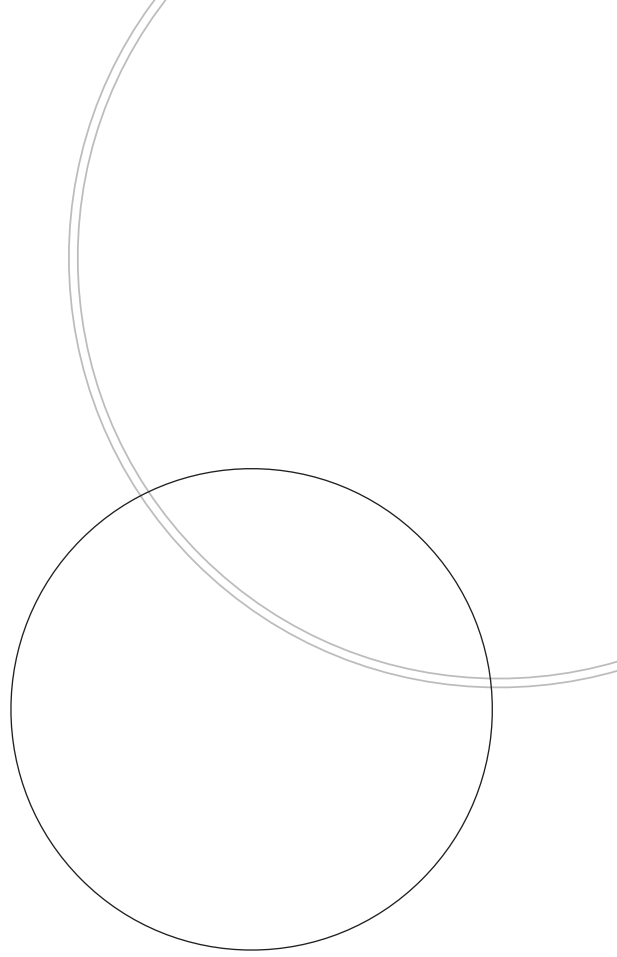
The most essential marriage advice we could give anyone is to get your priorities in order, make God your number one focus, and put your marriage above all other earthly relationships and pursuits. If you start there, you will have poured a strong foundation for life and a marriage that can stand.



PUT IT INTO PRACTICE



Today is a good day to commit to daily Bible study to strengthen your marriage. I want you to know I'm praying for you!



DAY 2

ONENESS

Father, I commit my marriage into Your hands. Please show us how to build our home on Your Word. Guide us by Your Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.



Our Story

I was only 19 years old when we got married. We thought marriage would be simple because we were both Christians, attracted to each other, and so much in love. We expected a “happily ever after” fairytale romance lasting 50 years. I was shocked when we started arguing the day after the wedding, and after three days of marriage, I cried myself to sleep.

David and I struggled at marriage for several years, and on our seventh anniversary, I was ready to leave and asked him for a divorce. Our bickering and poor conflict-resolution skills had destroyed my desire to continue trying to hold the marriage together. But that night, David stepped up to save our marriage. He said, “I don’t know what to do, but I know ending our marriage is wrong. We have two little girls, and we can’t do this to them. We need to get down on our knees and pray a one-word prayer: Help!”

God answered those prayers over the course of the next few years. It took time, but our marriage was resurrected. That’s why we share with other couples that marriage can be amazing. It takes a lot of work, selflessness, and putting God’s Word into practice, but it’s possible for dreams to come true. The changes in our marriage didn’t happen overnight, but God patiently taught us how to build a marriage to make it last. We wrote these books to share those insights with you.

Spend Time in God's Word



Leaving and Cleaving

To begin the work I needed to do for my part in our marriage, I started with Genesis 2:24, *“Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”* Leaving your mother and father is the first step toward building your marriage. You will always love and honor your parents, but you have created a new family unit, and your marriage takes priority. You will need to establish boundaries with your parents and his parents so they understand that you will make decisions with each other, welcoming their counsel but making the final decisions yourselves.

If one or all four of your parents create a barrier to the unity between you and your husband, it's time to take action. Gently and with respect, let your parents know that while you love them and appreciate their input, the two of you are now responsible adults who need to be your own family unit.

The Goal of Marriage: To Be One

We find the goal of marriage in the same verse: *“They shall become one flesh.”* Of course, the first thing that comes to mind is that now you can have the married, legal sex you have longed for. Sex is definitely part of oneness, but it's only one part. Being one in spirit, one in soul, and one in body is the joy and privilege of married life.

There is a right way and a wrong way to become “one.” Before you can join with your mate to experience the ultimate in spirit, soul, and body oneness, you each need to bring hearts that are full and not empty. Marriage unity will require you to pour out of your own heart into the heart of your mate. You’ll have nothing to give if your “love bucket” is empty.

How to Ensure Your Basic Needs Are Met

In our early marriage, we tried forcing each other to fill those internal “love buckets” so we would feel complete. You probably know a tick will attach to a dog to draw blood. At the beginning of our marriage, we were like two ticks with no dog! We were draining the lifeblood from each other. We were demanding of each other to fill a void that no human could fill. No wonder we were in trouble. We didn’t understand that we couldn’t possibly fill each other’s emptiness.

God created two basic needs in each of us, which are true in every culture and people group. The first basic need of humans is SECURITY, knowing we are loved and accepted. Both men and women need to know they are loved and accepted, especially by families, friends, and co-workers. For some women, the need to experience love in a relationship overwhelms all other needs.

The second basic need, SIGNIFICANCE, is vital for both sexes, but men often prioritize getting this need met. After introducing themselves to another man, many men ask, “What do you DO?”

Many couples enter marriage with high expectations of getting these personal needs met by the person they are marrying. She

is thinking about security: “I’ve finally met a man who will love me the way I was meant to be loved to make me feel safe and secure.” While he is thinking about significance: “I’ve finally met a woman who will respect me the way I was meant to be respected to make me feel significant.” This is why so many marriages fail from the start: each person is looking to their spouse to fulfill the basic needs of security and significance that only God can truly fulfill.

Philippians 4:19 (NIV) tells us, “*And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.*” Your spouse may be wonderful or terrible, but they cannot meet all of your basic human needs for security and significance. You’ll both become frustrated if you demand that they meet those needs. There is a vacuum inside you that only God can fill. Your mate can be a channel of blessing for God to use to help you experience love and help you experience significance, but they cannot be perfect in soothing the ache in your heart that only God can satisfy.

The Source for Meeting Your Needs

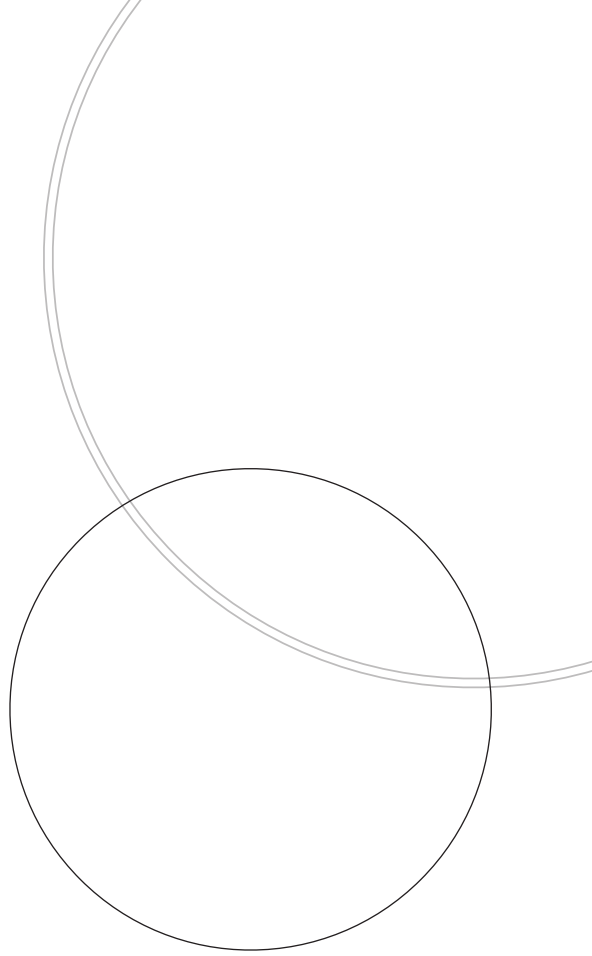
Jesus said in John 15:5, “*I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*” When we draw life from Jesus, allowing Him to meet our personal needs for security and significance, we can set our mates free from this impossible expectation and instead pour Christ’s love and life into their hearts without expecting anything in return.



PUT IT INTO PRACTICE



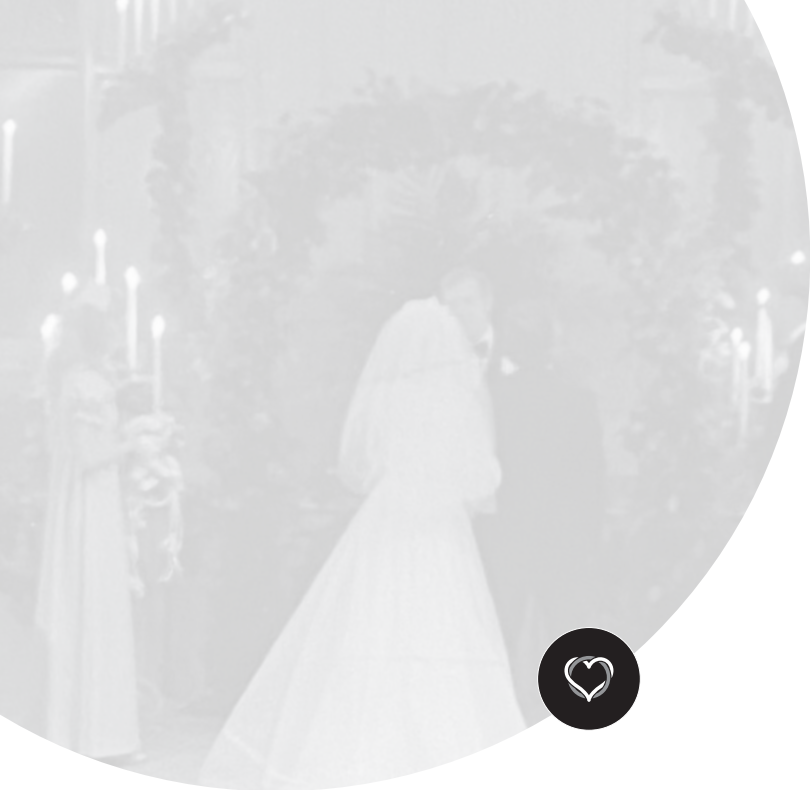
Be a good friend to your husband rather than demanding that he follow a “script” to love you the way you want to be loved. Focus on what you can do to make him feel loved. Learn what means the most to him and move it up on your priority list. Then, gently, at the right time, verbalize to him what makes you feel loved. Your husband can’t read your mind, so tell him how to speak your love language. Wait patiently as he learns how to help you experience love. This is a life-long lesson for both of you. God loves you completely, so when you feel unloved by your mate, go to God to draw life and love from Him and be kind and gentle with your husband.



DAY 5

SPIRIT ONENESS

Lord God, I pray that I would be filled with the knowledge of Your will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, that I walk in a manner worthy of You in my marriage, fully pleasing to You, and that I bear the fruit of love, joy, and peace in our relationship. This is my prayer in Jesus' name. Amen. (Colossians 1:9-10. Galatians 5:22)



Our Story

The night we prayed for our marriage, we confessed our sins (which were many) and cried out to God. When we got up off our knees after our desperate prayers the night our marriage almost ended, we didn't know how God was going to solve our marriage problems. At that time, we didn't know of any church programs, marriage retreats, or Bible studies to attend to learn about marriage. We were too ashamed to seek a Christian counselor. We knew God would answer our prayers but couldn't imagine how.

Only a few days later, He brought the help we desperately needed in the form of an invitation I received to join a women's prayer group. The women in the group were mature and mighty prayer warriors who prayed for us and began to teach me how to be a wife according to God's Word. I had so much to learn!

Spend Time in God's Word



Spirit Oneness

Genesis 2:24b says, “...and they shall become one flesh.”

- What is the keyword in this verse? What do you think it means?

My mentors advised us to start rebuilding our relationship by going back to the beginning of the Bible's first book. The scripture sets the goal of marriage as being one in spirit, soul, and body. We began by understanding spirit oneness.

We learned that we need an intimate relationship with God to satisfy our basic human needs for security and significance instead of trying to get those needs met by each other. We needed to learn to come to the Lord both individually and as a couple to acknowledge that all life is in Christ and that building a marriage and family without Him is impossible. By recognizing that our needs are fulfilled in Christ, we were able to begin loving and caring for each other without unrealistic expectations. Living that out didn't happen overnight, but slowly as we spent more time in prayer and Bible study, drawing close to God, it drew us to each other.

Maybe you haven't taken the first important step in spirit oneness by becoming a believer and follower of Jesus. You can't have spirit oneness with your mate if you are not yet in a relationship with

God. Maybe you have been going to church since childhood but have never made a personal decision to accept His Lordship over your life. There is no time like today to commit your life to Him.

Marriage teaches us that it's easy to see that we are all sinners. It becomes obvious how self-centered we really are.

Romans 3:23 says, *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."* The Bible says that all sin deserves the death penalty, but Jesus paid it fully on the Cross according to Romans 6:23: *"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."* To become a believer in Christ, we must accept His sacrifice verbally and believe that He is God, declaring our faith in Him according to Romans 10:9, *"...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."*

If you're ready to receive Christ's forgiveness for your sins and accept His sacrificial love, say a prayer something like this: *"Lord Jesus, I humble myself before You. I ask You to forgive my sin. Thank You for dying on the Cross to pay the death penalty for all of my sins. I now accept Your forgiveness. I am asking You to take control and be the Lord of my life. I surrender myself into Your hands. Thank You for Your love that will never leave me. Today, I am Your child. In Jesus' name. Amen."*

Once you make that decision, the angels in heaven rejoice! Now, you are free to love God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love your mate as you love yourself. When the two of you seek God with all of your hearts and join together to bow before Him in worship and obedience, you will experience a unity of heart and mind you never imagined.

One with God and Each Other

The highest form of marriage is when two individuals unite as one with God. You will experience harmony and peace even in the most challenging circumstances when His life flows through both of you. By submitting to His will, you can achieve beyond what you have ever dreamed, asked, or imagined. As believers in Jesus Christ, being married to each other enables you to live on a higher level of unity that most people only dream about.

But what if your mate does not believe in Christ and would never pray with you? What should you do? I Corinthians 7:12-16 gives this instruction: *“To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. ¹⁵ If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. ¹⁴ For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. ¹⁵ But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases, the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace. ¹⁶ For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?”*

If you have an unbelieving mate, pray diligently for them and love them unconditionally. Ask God to show you how to walk through life with them in love and faithfulness.

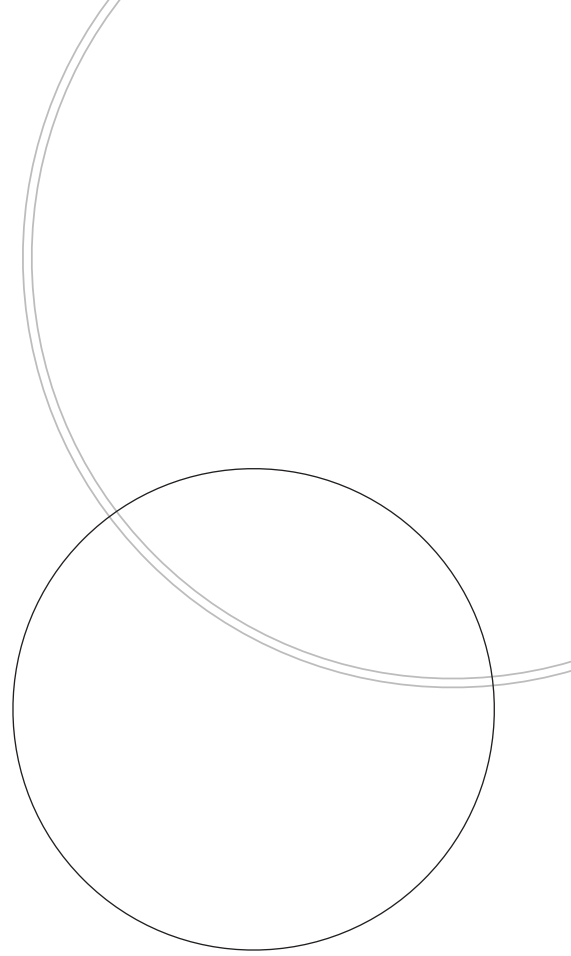
If you are married to a Christian, you can achieve spiritual oneness by spending time with God individually and as a couple. As you pray and read the Bible together, you will realize that investing in your relationship with God results in a powerful unity between you and your spouse.



PUT IT INTO PRACTICE



One of the best ways to build spirit oneness in your marriage is to pray together regularly. For the next 30 days, pray with your husband daily. Even if it's only for five minutes, it will change your marriage for the good! If you can spend 30 minutes in prayer daily, it will produce even more results. If he's unwilling to pray with you, pray for him and your marriage.



DAY 4

SOUL ONENESS

Father, Your Word says many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. Please expand my capacity to love my husband with this unshakeable, unconditional love. In Christ's name. Amen.



Our Story

David and I were best friends in college. We could stay up half the night talking about every subject imaginable. We talked about our beliefs, political convictions, and favorite foods. We discussed at length our preferred choices and realized we had the same taste in popular music, movies, and books. We liked adventures more than routines. Marrying your best friend is the best! Or was it?

After we married, somehow, the things we had in common got overridden by how we were so different. Dating highlighted our common ground because we could have momentary, enjoyable shared experiences and then go back home. However, marriage emphasized our vast differences because we now shared the same apartment, towels, and toothpaste!

Our families of origin operated very differently, and when we got married, we each reverted to “home life” as we knew it. It caused explosion after explosion of emotions. We kept trying to make the other follow the family patterns that were familiar to us, and neither would give in. We began to attack each other, and those fights caused both of us to feel insecure and insignificant. We had trouble finding our way back to friendship. We had to learn that to be true soul mates, we must serve each other.

Spend Time in God's Word



Learn to be a Soul Mate

John 15:12-14.

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹⁵ Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you.

- How are we to love each other?

- How do we demonstrate that love?

I John 3:16-19.

By this, we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷ But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. ¹⁹ By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him;

- How can you demonstrate your love for your husband in practical ways this week?

- In what ways should you lay down your life for your husband?

- Why is it important to not just talk about love, but to show it through our actions?

To become friends and soulmates, we had to learn to lay down our lives for each other. Building our friendship required sacrificing many of the habits and behaviors of our families of origin to build a new family with a new culture that blended the best of both families and eliminated the patterns that didn't fit. This process took time and patience, but we continued building our friendship over the years and decades to enjoy being the soulmates we are today.

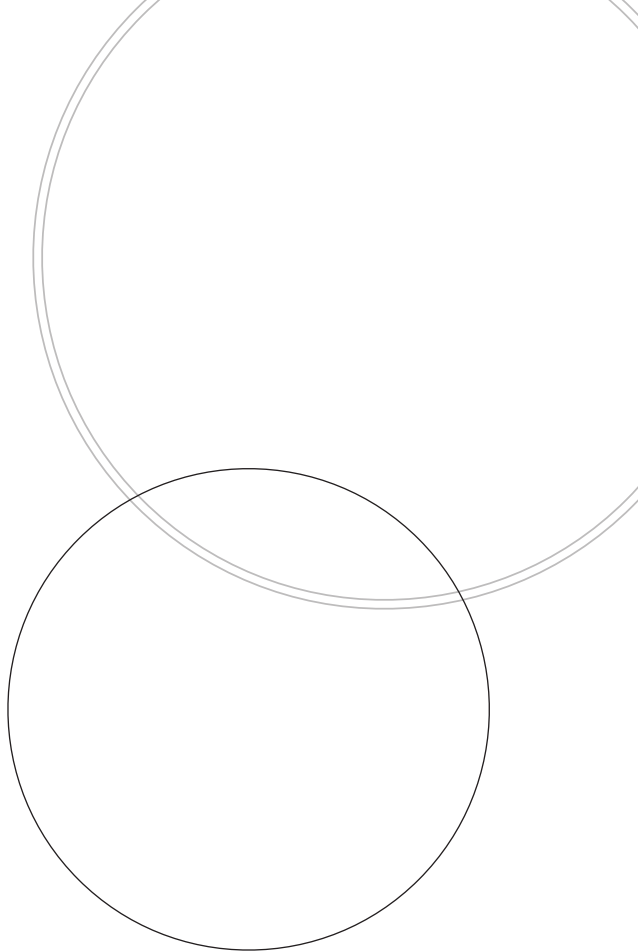
In the next few weeks of this study, we'll drill down into what it takes to be a great soulmate with your husband. You'll learn how to give your husband three gifts that don't cost money but are quite expensive. They will require sacrifice and unconditional love, but the benefits of soul oneness are worth all you put into it.



PUT IT INTO PRACTICE



If you struggle to be a good companion to your husband, find something the two of you enjoy together. You don't have to go on a 30-mile hike if that's not your thing but find a way to join him in his adventures and hobbies to build on your friendship. Study his love language and speak it fluently. If cooking, cleaning the house, or going to a ballgame with your husband makes him feel loved, prioritize those things. If he is casual about the cooking and cleaning, but having friends over to your home is important to him, open your heart and home.



DAY 5

BODY ONENESS

Father, I commit our sex life into Your hands. Bless our intimacy and bring us together as one. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Spend Time in God's Word



Body Oneness

Genesis 2:25 tells us, *“And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.”*

- Why were Adam and Eve not ashamed of their nakedness?

To say that we live in a sex-saturated culture is an understatement. It confuses couples desiring a love life as God intended. Marital sex is what the Bible describes as becoming “one flesh.” The first married couple, Adam and Eve, did it with God’s blessing. There was no shame attached to two naked bodies designed to connect in the most profound, most intimate way.

So, we know sex is good, but how does “one flesh” differ from R and X-rated movie versions of sex? Biblical oneness for couples has three parts: spirit, soul, and body oneness. Body oneness is the natural outcome of an intimate and vital marriage relationship, which comes from having spirit and soul oneness, where you pray together as a couple and minister to one another out of the riches of Christ’s love. From this, body oneness flows naturally and wonderfully. It’s legitimate physical pleasure with rich personal meaning. This is the way God intended sex to be.

To build true oneness with your husband, your sexual relationship in marriage is critical. One whole book of the Bible—Song of Solomon—is dedicated to describing in sensual terms the delights of married lovemaking.

The bride in Song of Solomon 1:2-4 says this,

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!

For your love is better than wine;

³ *your anointing oils are fragrant;*

your name is oil poured out;

therefore virgins love you.

⁴ *Draw me after you; let us run.*

The king has brought me into his chambers.

The groom in Song of Solomon 7:1-9 replies,

“How beautiful are your feet in sandals,

O noble daughter!

Your rounded thighs are like jewels,

the work of a master hand.

² *Your navel is a rounded bowl*

that never lacks mixed wine.

Your belly is a heap of wheat,

encircled with lilies.

⁵ *Your two breasts are like two fawns,*

twins of a gazelle.

⁴ *Your neck is like an ivory tower.*

Your eyes are pools in Heshbon,

by the gate of Bath-rabbim.

Your nose is like a tower of Lebanon,

which looks toward Damascus.

⁵ *Your head crowns you like Carmel,*

and your flowing locks are like purple;

a king is held captive in the tresses.
⁶ *How beautiful and pleasant you are,
O loved one, with all your delights!*
⁷ *Your stature is like a palm tree,
and your breasts are like its clusters.*
⁸ *I say I will climb the palm tree
and lay hold of its fruit.*
*Oh may your breasts be like clusters of the vine,
and the scent of your breath like apples,
⁹ and your mouth like the best wine.*

The Bride

*It goes down smoothly for my beloved,
gliding over lips and teeth.*

¹⁰ *I am my beloved's,
and his desire is for me.*

- What surprises you about this scripture passage?

It's not hard to understand the graphic description of the lover gazing at his wife's body, taking hold of her breasts and their deep, passionate kisses. Married sex is God's idea, and we are to enjoy it.

In Session 5 of this study, we'll learn much more about the Bible's teachings about lovemaking in marriage. We have that to look forward to!



PUT IT INTO PRACTICE



Read Song of Solomon 7:1-10 with your
husband after you get in bed tonight.

SESSION 1

DATE NIGHT



Touch: Kiss passionately for 20 seconds.



Talk: What is the most fun we've ever had together?



Tell: Both of you share your favorite character traits of your mate, such as kindness, humor, organization, or peacemaking.



To Remember: What was the best part of your first date together?



Thanksgiving: Thank God for your mate's special talents.